



Australian Government
Director of National Parks

Tourism Australia

The Kimberley

Journey to an awe-inspiring land.

The Kimberley provides adventurers with a truly epic experience. It's here you can take part in one of the last true outback adventures and experience the spectacular scenery along the 660 kilometre Gibb River Road. Search for pearls in Broome, look for birds in one of the most biologically diverse areas on earth or walk through the World Heritage-listed Bungle Bungle in Purnululu National Park. The Kimberley in Western Australia is one of the world's last great wilderness areas stretching from Broome in the west to beyond Kununurra to the east.

AN OUTDOOR ART GALLERY

The Kimberley has a rich Aboriginal history thought to stretch back over 50,000 years, with traditional laws and customs depicted through intricate rock art paintings across the landscape. The world-famous Gwion Gwion rock paintings are an integral part of the landscape and are older than the Egyptian pyramids. The Kimberley's dramatic Wandjina paintings, the creator spirits of the land, has become an internationally-recognised symbol of Aboriginal Australia and was an important part of the opening ceremony of the Sydney Olympics in 2000.

ANCIENT AND EXTRAORDINARY LANDSCAPES

The Kimberley is home to extremely diverse landscapes - intricate headlands and archipelagos, deep bays, impressive tidal effects, deep caves and gorges and magnificent waterfalls. The landscape is home to a world-heritage listed site, two National Heritage sites, four wetlands of international significance, 20 wetlands of national significance and 33 parks and reserves.

Rocks and plateaus

The World Heritage listed Purnululu National Park is home to the awe-inspiring 350-million year-old Bungle Bungle – a vast area of beehive like sandstone domes that rise 300 metres out of the earth, creating narrow chasms and hidden gorges. More than 650 types of plants, 130 birds, 81 reptile and 12 frog species live here.

In the north of the Kimberley, the Mitchell Plateau and spectacular Mitchell Falls are one of the least disturbed ecosystems left in the world and are of great biological importance. The plateau provides a refuge for threatened wildlife such as the monjon, a type of wallaby and the black grass wren.

THE KIMBERLEY GOGO FISH – A MISSING LINK IN THE EVOLUTIONARY CHAIN

The ancient tropical reefs of the 370-million year old Devonian era have been laid bare in the Kimberley, and in the 1980's scientists discovered well-preserved fossils of the remarkable gogo fish, the first sea creature to show physical characteristics of life's journey from ocean to land.

Gorges, tunnels and caves

At over three kilometres long with 300 metre-high walls, the 375-million year old Windjana Gorge in Windjana Gorge National Park contains deep freshwater pools surrounded by native fig trees. The pools are a paradise for a diverse array of wildlife such as parrots, fruit bats and freshwater crocodiles. The gorge is part of the Napier Range, where you'll also find Western Australia's oldest cave system in the nearby Tunnel Creek National Park. It's here you can walk nearly one kilometre into a tunnel and wade waist deep through freshwater pools. This was also the hide out of Jandamarra, the local Aboriginal resistance hero who fought to protect his culture from the devastating impacts of white settlement.

Untouched coastlines

The 400 square kilometre Montgomery Reef is Australia's largest inshore reef. The roaring tide rushes out in an awesome display of power to expose up to four metres of reef. The reef is home to a rich variety of marine life including fish, crabs, invertebrates, molluscs and sea plants. Turtles, dugongs, manta rays and many species of sea bird also inhabit the area.

The Buccaneer Archipelago contains around 1,000 islands over an area of about 50 square kilometres. At Talbot Bay huge tidal pressure is created by the small gaps between the islands, forcing water to rush through and creating the powerful Horizontal Falls. This environment provides a haven for whales, with the nutrient-rich waters providing important nursery habitat for their young.

Rowley Shoals Marine Park has some of the best diving and snorkelling sites in Western Australia. Explore three diverse reefs, home to a variety of corals, fish molluscs and other invertebrates and at least 13 species of larger marine animals including sea turtles, manta rays, whales and dolphins.

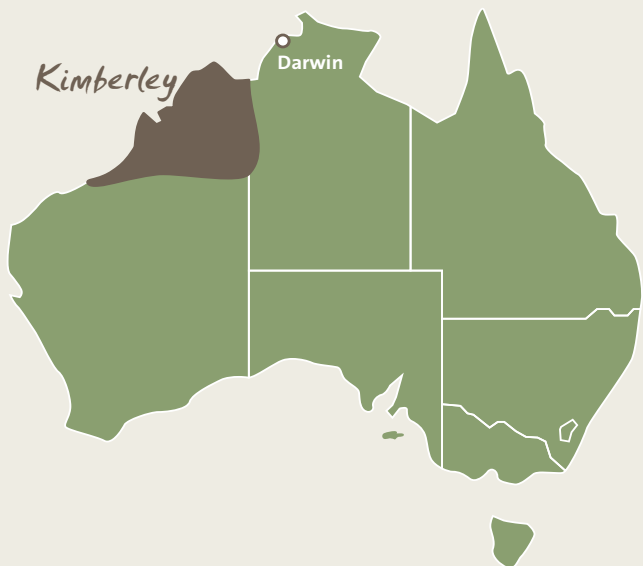
BIRD WATCHING IN THE KIMBERLEY

One of Broome's most beautiful natural attractions, Roebuck Bay is an internationally significant wetland. More than 300,000 migratory birds visit the area making it one of the most important shorebird conservation areas in the Asia Pacific region. The nearby Eighty Mile Beach is also an internationally significant wetland area.

Further east, near Wyndham, the 36,000 hectare Parry's Lagoon attracts migratory birds come from as far as Siberia to feed, with the seasonal wetlands of the Ord River floodplain supporting large numbers of birds, providing habitat, breeding and food for 77 different bird species.



Sea turtle research



CONSERVING THE KIMBERLEY LANDSCAPE

Conservationists are increasingly trying to link landscapes to provide breeding and habitat corridors for Australia's wildlife. Managing entire landscapes against weeds and pests helps build more resilient ecosystems and healthier water catchments.

In addition to national parks, the not-for-profit organisation Australian Wildlife Conservancy owns and manages two properties – Marion Downs and Mornington Sanctuary in the Kimberley. Here they are helping conserve Australia's unique natural environment, promoting conservation to visitors and developing wildlife corridors across the landscape. Find out more about this work at www.australianwildlife.org

Covering 640,000 hectares the two sanctuaries provide habitat for more than 700 plant, 200 bird, 33 mammal and nearly 100 reptile and amphibian species. The Australian Wildlife Conservancy's wilderness camp provides an ideal base for visitor activities, embedded in the principles of sustainability and conservation.

HELP PROTECT THIS AWE-INSPIRING WORLD

You make your own contribution to conserving our natural world when you visit the Kimberley. Low-impact activities such as bushwalking, cycling and canoeing all provide fantastic opportunities to get off the beaten track and discover new worlds that are like nothing else on earth.

Take some time to explore our unique environment and contribute to its conservation and protection. When visiting always take your rubbish with you, don't feed the native animals and leave flowers, plants, rocks and sticks where they are as they provide important wildlife habitat.

- Get involved in efforts to protect this distinctive natural environment for generations to come. Take part in Conservation Volunteers Australia sea turtle monitoring program or for more information go to www.naturewise.com.au
- Help ensure habitat protection for some of Australia's most endangered species. For more information go to: www.australianwildlife.org

For more information on this landscape or to learn about other naturally beautiful places which offer a different but uniquely Australian experience. Visit www.australia.com/nl